

5. (Amended.) The method of claim 1, wherein the supernatant obtained from cultivating positive clones is used as a starting material for additional screening steps.

6. (Amended.) The method of claim 1, wherein the secreted product is an enzyme, and wherein at least one enzyme produced by a positive clone is isolated and tested in a functional assay for desired enzymatic activity.

7. (Amended.) The method of claim 1, wherein the donor strain is a microorganism.

8. (Amended.) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of subjecting a secreted compound from a positive clone to an assay in which a desired functionality is tested for to identify clones that produce a compound exhibiting the desired functionality.

9. (Amended.) The method of claim 8, wherein the desired functionality is selected from wash performance, thermal stability, substrate specificity, catalytic turnover, oxidation stability, sensitivity to inhibitors, pH optimum, detergent stability, stability against microbial inactivation, toxicology, distribution profile in the human or animal body, metabolism products, side effects, rate of metabolism or secretion, receptor binding capacity, and antimicrobial capacity.

10. (Amended.) The method of claim 1, wherein the preparation of a gene library of step (b) is replaced by preparing a gene library from one or more microorganisms different from the donor organism.

11. (Amended.) The method of claim 1, wherein the preparation of a gene library of step (b) includes a step of mutating a nucleotide sequence of the library.

12. (Amended.) A compound obtained by the method of claim 1.

13. (Amended.) The compound of claim 12, which is selected from the group consisting of proteins and peptides.

15. (Amended.) A method for screening for a nucleotide sequence encoding a compound secreted by an organism, comprising:

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- (a) raising antibodies against secreted products of a donor organism,
 - (b) providing a gene library from the donor organism,
 - (c) cloning the gene library into a suitable host organism,
 - (d) expressing the cloned genes in the host organism,
 - (e) detecting positive clones expressing a cloned gene encoding a secreted compound using the antibodies of (a) to identify such positive clones, and
 - (f) subjecting at least one positive clone to nucleotide sequencing to identify at least one nucleotide sequence encoding a secreted compound.

16. (Amended.) A nucleotide sequence obtained by the method of claim 15.

17. (Amended.) A method for screening microorganisms for strains that secrete a compound, comprising:

- (a) raising antibodies against secreted products of a donor organism, and
- (b) subjecting the microorganisms to an immunoassay using the antibodies from step (a) to identify microorganisms that secrete said compound.

18. (Amended.) The method of claim 17, wherein the screened microorganism is different from the donor organism.

19. (Amended.) The method of claim 17, wherein the organism to be screened is present in an environmental sample comprising a mixture of different microorganisms.

20. (Amended.) A microorganism obtained by the method of claim 17.